

H. Res. 443

In the House of Representatives, U.S.,

May 23, 2000.

Whereas the people of American Samoa have inhabited Tutuila and the Manu'a Islands for at least 3,000 years and developed a unique and autonomous seafaring and agrarian culture, governing themselves through their own form of government;

Whereas in 1722, Dutch explorer Jacob Roggeveen became the first European to sight—but not land on—the shores of the Samoan Islands, islands which remained isolated for another 46 years because Roggeveen miscalculated their location;

Whereas in 1768, French explorer Louis Antoine de Bougainville, the second European to sight the Samoan islands, became so impressed with the sailing skills of the natives he named the islands “L’Archipel des Navigateurs,” and for generations thereafter the entire Samoan island group was known to the Western World as the “Navigator Islands”;

Whereas in 1787, Frenchman Jean Francois La Perouse landed on the shores of these islands and thus began the “opening” of Samoa to the West, with American whalers as the principal group to engage the people of Samoa in trade and commerce, followed from 1830 on by English missionaries;

Whereas in 1839, as part of a congressionally authorized trip to the Pacific, United States Navy commander Charles Wilkes visited the island of Tutuila and later reported favorably in support of establishing a structured relationship between the island and the United States;

Whereas on March 2, 1872, Richard Meade, commander of the U.S.S. *Narragansett*, visited Pago Pago, and, on his own responsibility, made an agreement with High Chief Mauga entitled “Commercial Regulations, etc.,” which was submitted to, but never ratified by, the Senate;

Whereas on February 13, 1878, a “treaty of friendship and commerce with the people of Samoa” was proclaimed ratified;

Whereas on June 14, 1889, a treaty known as the General Act of 1889, between the United States, Germany, and Great Britain, and assented to by the Samoan Government, “to provide for the security of the life, property and trade of the citizens and subjects of their respective Governments residing in, or having commercial relations with the Islands of Samoa,” was concluded and later ratified;

Whereas on December 2, 1899, a tripartite treaty between the United States, Germany, and Great Britain, which provided for the division of the several islands of Samoa, was signed by the three parties in Washington, D.C.;

Whereas on April 17, 1900, by treaty of cession, the traditional chiefs of the South Pacific Islands of Tutuila and Aunu’u agreed to become a part of the United States in return for protection of their land and culture, and the United States flag was raised on what is now known as the United States Territory of American Samoa;

Whereas on July 14, 1904, by treaty of cession, His Majesty the King of Manu'a and his traditional chiefs from the Islands of Ta'u, Ofu, and Olosega, agreed to become part of the United States in return for the protection of their land and culture;

Whereas since that time, the residents of American Samoa have been proud of their affiliation with this great Nation and have demonstrated their loyalty and patriotism in countless ways;

Whereas April 17 is known as Flag Day in American Samoa and is the biggest holiday in the territory, and is celebrated not only in American Samoa, but throughout the United States wherever there is a sizable Samoan community;

Whereas American Samoans in Hawaii, California, Nevada, Utah, Alaska, Washington, and other parts of the United States pause each year on this important date to celebrate this monumental occasion in American Samoa's history;

Whereas the per capita rate of enlistment in the Armed Forces among American Samoans is among the highest in the United States, with hundreds of American Samoans enlisting annually;

Whereas for decades American Samoa served as a Naval coaling station for United States ships in the Pacific, providing the Nation with what is commonly referred to as the best deep-water harbor in the entire Pacific—a harbor where American ships are protected from severe and sudden tropical storms by natural, high, sloping mountains—a harbor which, in the Nation's youth, served as a critical and crucial refueling and replenishing port for

military and commercial interests, enabling the United States to pursue its foreign and commercial policies, logistically unrestrained, throughout the Asian Pacific region;

Whereas during World War II, American Samoa was the staging point for 30,000 United States Marines involved in the Pacific theater, with American Samoans serving both as hosts and as fellow soldiers to these Marines via the revered Fita Fita Guard;

Whereas American Samoa was the first land astronauts from numerous Apollo missions came to upon returning to Earth—including astronauts from Apollo 10, Apollo 12, Apollo 13, Apollo 14, and Apollo 17;

Whereas American Samoa produces more National Football League players per capita than any other State or territory of the United States, with approximately 15 Samoans currently playing professionally;

Whereas April 17, 2000, will mark the 100th anniversary of American Samoa joining in political, military, and economic union with the United States;

Whereas local government leaders in American Samoa have been preparing for this centennial celebration for the last 3 years; and

Whereas although 100 years have elapsed since the formation of this mutually beneficial relationship, American Samoans today—as did their forebears in 1900—remain deeply thankful and appreciative of the benefits they have received and continue to receive as a result of the unique relationship American Samoa shares with this great Republic, and they are proud that in return for the benefits received under this relationship, they actively contribute

economically, militarily, and culturally to the health and well-being of this great Nation: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes the historical significance of the centennial of the raising of the American flag over the United States Territory of American Samoa;

(2) acknowledges 100 years of American Samoa's loyalty and service to the United States; and

(3) reaffirms its commitment to the United States citizens and nationals of American Samoa for improved self-governance, economic development, and the expansion of domestic commerce, consistent with the desires of the people of American Samoa.

Attest:

Clerk.